

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Kirk present. Absent: Chatterjee, Kreider and Wallace.

MINUTES

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of January 23, 2006 meeting, (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Raser) with corrections.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 2 DEXTER PLACE, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented a report on the construction of a new addition and deck on the rear of 2 Dexter Place, a contributing building in the East Walnut Hills Historic District. The new deck will replace an existing shed and deck.

Ms. Kellam indicated, that there was a pre-hearing held and that there were no adjacent property owners in attendance. Staff also notified the East Walnut Hills Assembly and it was determined that there was no opposition by the Assembly to the project.

Ms. Kellam showed plans and elevation of the changes to be made and explained that the addition would have a wood frame, clapboard siding, a gray standing seam metal roof, wood doors and windows; an open deck would feature wrought iron railings, a lattice apron and an exterior fireplace and chimney. Ms. Kellam said that because the addition is on the rear of the property, it is not highly visible from the street. Staff believes the design is compatible with the house and meets the guidelines; but recommends that a simpler wood railing for the deck would be more appropriate than the metal rail proposed. Ms. Kellam clarified for Ms. Sullebarger that the existing French doors would remain.

Guy Humphrey, project architect, was present to answer questions from the Board. He confirmed that he had considered stucco or brick for the addition but selected clapboard because it had been used on the existing shed and to distinguish the addition from the house. The clapboard will be cementitious board or wood.

It was also the opinion of Mr. Humphrey that the wrought iron railing was more appropriate for the home and could be more easily configured to the arc of the deck than the wood suggested by staff. However, he said that the wrought iron design should be simplified.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second Bloomfield) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the new addition and deck with the following conditions:
 - a) That the wrought iron/metal railings be simplified.
 - b) Final plans including metal charcoal gray standing seam roof and light fixture details be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 317 BOAL STREET, PROSPECT HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Kellam presented a staff report on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the addition of a roof deck of 317 Boal Street. She indicated that the proposal is to remove the fourth story wall and cut away a portion of the roof to create a new roof deck. The deck will have an aluminum railing; the new exterior wall behind will have vinyl windows and siding.

Jay Rashad, representing the Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association, presented Ms. Kellam with a letter of support at the pre-hearing meeting. Mr. Rashad explained that the Association supported the project because the roofline was not being cut away and that the chimneys were being retained. The alterations were also only minimally visible from Boal Street.

Ms. Kellam pointed out to the Board that the new work would only be visible from a portion of Milton Street shown in the photograph in the Staff Report. Staff has some reservation about eliminating the entire fourth story of the building and suggests that the wall be removed only to the window sills and capped with concrete or stone coping.

Mr. Raser stated that in his experience, the applicant's proposal to remove the fourth floor wall was a better long-term solution for drainage issues. Ms. Sullebarger stressed that she felt that the part of the building being eliminated was more visible from the street than indicated in the photographs and eliminating it would be removing significant original fabric. However, she does appreciate the point that is being addressed with the drainage issue and the long-term effect it will have on the future health of the building.

Mr. Raser said that although he would be concerned for retaining the upper portion of the façade were it on a principal façade, the new roof deck would be on the rear of the building, largely out of view from the street. Given that and the issue of draining the new deck, he moved staff recommendation without the condition that a portion of the attic wall be retained (second Mr. Kirk). The motion failed, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Senhauser against.

Derrick Tarver, owner of the property, asked that the Board also consider the installation of a picture window (or alternately a third sash window) between two existing double-hung windows on the third floor. He presented a drawing of the rear façade with the proposed change. He indicated that a similar treatment had been approved for a nearby property at 319 Boal Street.

Mr. Forwood confirmed that staff had approved work at 319 Boal some years earlier, but under somewhat different circumstances. Its rear elevation had already been modified, the condition of the masonry on the upper level was deteriorated and the work was not visible from the street.

Mr. Bloomfield moved the staff recommendation as proposed (second Sullebarger), without the proposed picture window. The motion failed, Raser, Kirk and Bloomfield against.

BOARD ACTION

The majority of the Board voted (motion by Raser, second Bloomfield, Spraul-Schmidt not voting) to approve Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the new deck and as shown in the drawings as originally submitted with the condition that the final plans be reviewed and approved by the Urban Conservator prior to issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness and a building permit.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 1311 SPRING STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden submitted a staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances for a new detached garage, fencing and a wall associated with a two-family building at 1311 Spring Street. Ms. Cowden stated that no one attended the pre-hearing meeting.

However, she had received one letter from Ty Provosty, president of the Pendleton Community Council, supporting the project but offering some suggestions on the garage design.

Ms. Cowden said that typically accessory structures are located either at the street or in the rear of a property; an existing parking easement for 1313 Spring Street and the owner's desire to retain his landscaped back yard precludes this configuration. Although the saltbox form of the garage is atypical in Over-the-Rhine, the proposed scale, size and materials meet the guidelines for new construction. Staff recommended that windows (or reveals) be added to the garage's first floor street façade to better reflect the composition of neighboring buildings. John Zinn, the owner, confirmed to Ms. Sullebarger that the second floor will be used for storage only.

Ms. Cowden stated that several different types of screening currently surround the back yard including a 4' brick wall, chain-link fencing and 6' wood privacy fence. The owner was proposing to construct an 8' brick wall on the rear and side property lines and a brick wall and metal (or wood) picket fence with a gate at the street. Staff recommended that the brick wall along Spring Street be replaced with an iron fence.

The 8' brick wall requires a Zoning Variance as does the garage for its height and its location in a side yard.

Mr. Zinn and his architect, Denny Dellinger, were present to address the Board. Mr. Zinn circulated photographs and described the types and sizes of fences that encircle his property. He contended that a wall in excess of 6' is necessary to secure the property from trespassers. Mr. Zinn conceded that in some portions of the yard 6' would likely be sufficient. Upon inquiry Mr. Dellinger stated the turning radius from Spring Street into the property would determine if the motor-operated gate could be narrowed.

There was some confusion about the final finished height of the new wall, from Mr. Zinn's as well as adjacent properties. Mr. Bloomfield suggested that the applicant return to the Board with drawings that accurately depicted the various conditions and the true topography of the site. In response to the applicant, the Board agreed that an 8' brick wall would be superior to a 6' pressure-treated wood privacy fence.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second Raser) to table discussion of the proposed work in order to give the applicant an opportunity to provide additional information and justification on the new perimeter wall and to incorporate design changes to the garage as suggested at this meeting.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE, 1920 DEXTER AVENUE, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Ms. Cowden presented a staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variance for the demolition of an existing garage and play house and the construction of a new garage and indoor swimming pool. A total of six zoning variances will be required for the new construction. These included variances for the height of the garage, the size and height of the pool house/greenhouse and the side yard location and number of the accessory structures.

Ms. Cowden stated that the existing garage is a non-contributing structure. It is difficult to access and lacks sufficient storage for automobiles, equipment, lawn furniture, and toys. Staff has no objection to its demolition and stated the siting and design of the new garage is appropriate for the property and compatible with the historic district.

Ms. Cowden stated that the project includes a new indoor pool located east of the residence. The pool will permit the owner aquatic physical therapy year round. Like the new garage, the pool house reflects the historic house in style and materials. It will also include a greenhouse;

however, the manufacturer has not yet been identified. Ms. Cowden said that 1920 Dexter Avenue was a very large property capable of accommodating the new construction but was concerned that it will require the removal of a mature sycamore and magnolia trees. Project architect Steven Ginter indicated that he was exploring alternative designs and siting that would preserve the trees.

The poolhouse/greenhouse will occupy the site of an existing, contributing, small playhouse. The playhouse shows water damage and wood rot; past efforts to preserve the structure for reuse have failed. Ms. Cowden said that although staff regrets its loss, the condition of the playhouse warrants demolition, independent of the proposed new construction.

A pre-hearing meeting was held on Tuesday, February 7, 2006; only Mr. Ginter was present. Staff has received letters from two adjacent property owners supporting the project. Mary Ann Lee, president of the East Walnut Hills Assembly, indicated in telephone conversations with staff that the Assembly needs additional information and asked that the Board table the application until it can comment.

Staff believed it has sufficient information to recommend approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for the demolition of the exiting garage and playhouse and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances for the new carriage house. Ms. Cowden recommended that the Board delay consideration of the poolhouse/greenhouse pending design revisions or submittal of further justification for its size/footprint.

In response to Mr. Bloomfield, Ms. Cowden confirmed that a carriage house once associated with the residence stands on a separate lot and is presently used as a residence.

In answer to Mr. Raser, Mr. Ginter confirmed that the greenhouse was sited on the south elevation to take maximum advantage of sunlight and that he is still exploring options for its design. Mr. Senhauser commented that the house is finely detailed and that finding a greenhouse compatible with the grounds and structures would be a challenge. Mr. Ginter said that he and the owner had been in contact with several manufacturers capable of producing a greenhouse in a dark finish to simulate the wrought iron gates on the property.

Mr. Senhauser asked Mr. Ginter if he was in agreement with the staff recommendation to table the issue of the poolhouse at this time. Mr. Ginter replied that the owner's immediate concern was to receive permission to demolish the playhouse. He acknowledged that some issues are unresolved and that he would discuss reducing the size of the poolhouse with his clients. He reminded the Board that the size of the pool house is dictated largely by the minimum dimensions of the lap pool and area for the aquatic equipment for physical therapy.

Mr. Raser moved that the application be tabled in order to give the East Walnut Hills Assembly an opportunity to comment on the project as a whole; there was no second and the motion failed.

BOARD ACTION

The majority of Board voted (motion by Sullebarger, second Spraul-Schmidt, Kirk opposed) voted to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the playhouse and the garage, finding that their demolition will not negatively impact the property or the historic district.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed carriage house as shown in the attached drawings finding that the structure meets the East Walnut Hills Historic District conservation guidelines.
3. Approve the necessary Zoning Variances for the 16'-8" height of the carriage house, its size, and its location in the side yard and to permit three accessory buildings on the property

finding that such relief from the literal interpretation of the Cincinnati Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and

- a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
4. Table consideration of the poolhouse/greenhouse to permit the applicant to investigate options for reducing the building footprint and/or reorienting the greenhouse and to return to the Historic Conservation Board at a later date.
5. Final construction drawings and material/product selections shall be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

OTHER BUSINESS

Urban Conservator William Forwood introduced a by-leave regarding a landscaping change at 2957 Annwood Avenue. The owner Catherine Cantey has submitted an engineering change to add a stone wall (rising from 9 to 23 inches high) set back approximately 5 feet from and paralleling the property line shared with Peter and Diane Marcus. The Marcuses have objected to staff's approval of the work and asked that the Board make the final determination. Mr. Forwood circulated a copy of an email from the Marcuses suggesting the Board table the application.

Mr. Forwood also circulated copies of a revised site plan and new wall section. He said that the wall is the only proposed change; the planting plan previously approved by the Board is unchanged. Storm Water Management will be reviewing the engineering change for its affect on site drainage. Staff recommends approval as consistent with the approved plan and the historic district guidelines.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second Spraul-Schmidt) to approve the proposed stone wall as a minor change to and consistent with the site plan approved by the Board June 13, 2005 and September 12, 2005.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser,
Chairman

Date: _____